

have never been out of their romantic mountain-walled hole, in which they are shut up by snow for four months every winter. Ten families live there, each one possessing a step. They said they owned sixty-five goats and sheep, five cows, and seven asses; that they sell their wheat, and salt from a salt spring at the back of the hill, and that their food is chiefly acorn flour made into bread, curds, and wild celery.

This bread is made from the fruit of the *Quercus lallota*, which is often nearly three inches long. The acorns are not gathered, but picked up when they fall. The women bruise them between stones to expel the bitter juices.. They are afterwards reduced to flour, which is well washed to remove the remaining bitterness, and dried in the sun. It is either made into thin cakes and baked, or is mixed into a paste with buttermilk and water and eaten raw. The baked cakes are not very unpalatable, but the paste is nauseous. Acorn flour is never used from choice.

The grain is exchanged for blue cottons and tobacco. It is not possible to imagine a more isolated life. Tihiran and Isfahan are names barely known to these people, and the Shah is little more to them than the Czar.

Near the *imamzada* of Sahid is a burial-ground, rendered holy by the dust of a *pir* or saint who lies there. It has many headstones, and one very large gray stone lion, on whose sides are rude carvings of a gun, a sword, a dagger, a powder-flask, and a

spear. On a few
low headstones a peculiar comb is carved,
denoting that
the grave is that of a woman.

To several stones long locks of hair are
attached, some
black and shining, others dead-looking and
discoloured.

It is customary for the Bakhtiari women to
sacrifice their
locks to the memory of their husbands and
other near
male relatives.